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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Cal Poly Student Wins Soil Research Competition

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Ian Leslie, a Cal Poly soil science senior, won first place this month in the National Undergraduate Oral Research Presentation Contest at the joint annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America International.

Leslie presented a paper on research he and several others did in spring 2008, focused on assessing concentrations of chromium and nickel in the soil and vines at Cal Poly's vineyard.

These heavy metals are found naturally in serpentinite – California's state rock, which is abundant in many areas of San Luis Obispo County. Soil derived from this rock can have elevated levels of these metals, which could pose a hazard to soil and vine quality.

Leslie's research found the levels of chromium and nickel in the Cal Poly vineyard soil were well below U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's maximum contamination levels and posed no risk to vine growth or quality.

The research was part of a laboratory project done in a soil and water chemistry course taught by Chip Appel. Leslie's paper was co-authored by Appel, along with Keith Patterson, a viticulture professor, and Craig Stubler, an earth and soil sciences technician. Six soil and water chemistry classmates took part in the research with Leslie.

The societies' meetings were held Oct. 5-9 in Houston, Texas. Leslie presented his research Oct. 5 and found out the next day that he had won the contest.

This is the second consecutive year a student from the soil and water chemistry course has won the contest. David Guerena placed first in November 2007. Guerena's research assessed levels of zinc around a galvanized power line tower in San Luis Obispo.

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